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INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY. XII

PART III. GENERAL STRUCTURE OF SOCIETIES

CHAPTER VII. THE SOCIAL FRONTIERS (CONTINUED)

SECTION IV. BELIEFS, FACTS, AND INSTITUTIONS RELATIVE TO THE SOCIAL FRONTIERS IN THE GREAT EMPIRES OF HISTORIC ANTIQUITY

The great historic civilizations of antiquity are known to us not only by their customs, their actions, and their institutions, but in general by writings and inscriptions, and even by the both religious and social Bibles or encyclopædias, which set forth the first co-ordinated conceptions of the physical, organic, and super-organic world.

Among these civilizations, those of Egypt and China seem the most ancient. The Egyptians were conquering tribes that gradually became intermixed by conquest. At first independent of each other, these tribes successively formed principalities, then great kingdoms (High and Low Egypt), and finally a single empire under the Pharaohs. However, the forms, and especially the original political frontiers, remained always recognizable. They became again still more so when the imperial unity tended to dissolve. At that time they reappeared like the first layers upon a painting when the superficial layers are effaced. The nomes, or administrative divisions, under the empire, were the old principalities which were themselves also composed of a principal city with its territory consisting of cultivated land, pastures, swamps, and ponds, just as the empire with its capital and its varied territories. Why did these frontiers persist and reappear at the close of the empire, which had transformed the frontiers from nomes indicating boundaries into administrative and religious circumscriptions? Why did these old divisions, although modified by several reconquests, persist still for a long time, even up to the Arab conquest? Evidently for the reason that they corresponded, not to arbitrary limits, but to social divisions at once territorial, genetic, economic, religious, moral, juridic, and political, which

had left a strong imprint upon their former lineaments, but which, in an organization generally issued from conquest, had persisted above all in their most rigid and most fixed aspect, the military aspect. The military and political frontiers, properly speaking, in harmony with the sovereignty generally survive with their primitive character, at the time when the limits of the other social forces, very much less stable by reason of their special nature and complexity, such as art, religion, morals, law, and even those of economic life, for a long time have exceeded the strategic frontiers by which the public authority is officially and nominally circumscribed. The inverse phenomena, however, may happen, and the political authority may embrace within its limits a domain and a population of which certain parts are in reality already removed from its influence and may gravitate within the sphere of external centers. Then, sooner or later, a displacement of the political frontiers will be inevitable for the sake of an effective equilibrium of the intersocial forces.

Let us remark that this great Egyptian civilization was extended over the two banks of the Nile, just as other civilizations were developed on the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates. These rivers of the most remote antiquity were no more barriers than if they had never existed. They were means of communication; and similarly the little principalities prior to the foundation of the great empires were not limited by the creeks, which also generally irrigated, like the great rivers, homogeneous populations scattered along the two banks. Only during a certain period of time did the seas and deserts, especially the latter, serve as obstacles, as physical limits. From 5000 to about 3000 B. C., under the first Pharaohs, Egypt was inclosed within physical limits at the north, east, and west by sea and desert. Under the Fourth Dynasty the Pharaohs installed themselves along the Red Sea and also along the opposite shores of the gulf which extends up to the Isthmus of Suez. The deserts were crossed at the latter place. The oases of the west were occupied only after the close of the Sixth Dynasty, and it was only after the Thirteenth Dynasty that Egypt extended above the second cataract. Then it crossed the isthmus, and in the time of Amenophis III it came in contact with

Assyria and Chaldea. The three powers touched each other. Their great rivers connected them with the sea. Assyria commanded the heights, the sources; the Chaldeans, the plain and mouths of the Tigris and Euphrates; and by the latter and the Gulf of Persia all these peoples, embraced in the same movement, were connected with the sea.

The eastern coast of the Mediterranean between Egypt and Assyria became the zone of contention. Protected by the mountains, Phoenicia for a long time was able to maintain itself along this coast and to develop by sending out its merchants into Asia, into the islands of the Mediterranean, and along the Greek coast.

All the while, as we see, the tribes or principalities or independent kingdoms were absorbed by one or another empire, their frontiers were transformed, and they became the bases of internal administrative divisions, even for religious purposes. Furthermore, in proportion as the general frontiers became more distant, the internal machinery of administration became specialized and complicated. Among the incorporated populations the external frontiers of the original groups were removed, even between the different classes, for the sake of substituting therefor a strong military organization, administrators and prætors, under a supreme head. That the military and political boundaries must be displaced before a relative peace can be established in the interior, the great Roman peace was an example such as humanity has not presented since.

I now call attention again to an important phenomenon. It is that great intersocial agitations are produced especially in the frontier zones, which are not only military zones, but also zones of commerce, of products, and of interchange of ideas between peoples. In the military phase of civilizations these frontier zones naturally tend to take on also a military character. But we have seen that the desert is the most powerful of obstacles. The oceans, interior seas, great rivers, lakes, and creeks first cease to present themselves as obstacles. Each military state will therefore tend to make its frontier zone a military zone, and the best means will be by transforming this zone into a desert, or artificially fortifying it by concentrating there its principal military

forces. Hence the great rôle played in the formation of the modern powers by the *boundary zones*, as we shall see particularly in what follows. The historic civilizations, prior to the Græco-Roman civilization, have left for us little trustworthy information on this subject, but quite permit the supposition that the practices were then analogous to those of later epochs. When toward the middle of the Twelfth Dynasty, in about 3000 B. C., Osurtesen III established his frontier at the rapids of Semneh, he fortified them. He had veritable *boundary zones* for the less stable parts of the empire, since later acquisitions, such as the boundary zone of Nubia and the eastern boundary zone, Ethiopia, were the most precarious conquest and were maintained solely by military force, which became at a certain moment the center of a new Egyptian empire and the means of a reorganization of Egyptian unity; just as in our day Piedmont and previously Brandenburg have been the centers of the formation of Italian unity and German unity, as well as a general military unity. The boundary zones are the true frontiers of attack and defense where the antagonistic efforts of groups which tend to encroach upon each other are manifested. When the boundary zones themselves happen to be transformed into intermediate regions separating two hostile powers, they continue their work as barriers, at the same time acquiring a function already in part peaceful. These are then what are called state buffers, such as at present exist in Asia between England and Russia, and in all the European zone which extends between France and Germany from the North Sea to the Mediterranean. The whole eastern coast of the Mediterranean constituted a zone of this kind, serving as a closed field for the empires of the Nile, Tigris, and Euphrates, and favoring in an intermittent fashion peaceful and commercial relations.

The rivers and creeks served to no greater extent as frontiers for the Chaldean empire than for Egypt. They penetrated the center of it. At the east there were mountains—limits which are always crossed, and at the west the desert of Arabia, the most powerful obstacle to expansion. The evolution was analogous to that of Egypt. The first Chaldean cities were established along the lower course of the Euphrates or along the navigable streams

which were connected with it. At first little independent kingdoms were formed, which ended by separating into two groups, one at the north and the other at the south. A third intermediary region vacillated from one group to the other. At the south developed commerce and industry. At the north, in contact with the enemy, arose Babylon, the fighting city. Colonization was made from south to north by advancing up the rivers. The north represented the military region, which in accordance with circumstances ended by imposing its domination. The first treaty known in history was that with the prince of Khite, who dominated over the western region of the lower course of the Euphrates, where the Egyptians made invasions into Assyria. There was stipulated a perpetual peace, as in all of the later treaties, and equality and perfect reciprocity between the two peoples. It was at once a defensive and offensive alliance, and a treaty of commerce. The double aspect, at once military and peaceful, indicates the constant rôle of the intermediate zones, which are the battleground of the enemies whom they separate, and at the same time countries of transit. In the treaty even the extradition of criminals was provided, and also of refugees, particularly of artisans. These latter were obliged to be extradited, but could not be punished by the power to which they belonged. This treaty dates from the twenty-first year of Rameses II.

This state of Khite, established in the mountainous districts of Commagene, expanded more and more for the purpose of protecting itself against Egypt. It was later called a barrier, but this barrier could be maintained only on condition of being powerful, and the rôle of the intermediary zones is not that of conquest and domination within the area of the boundary zones. The latter are the real organs of attack. Accordingly, less than a century after the treaty, the empire of Khite was destroyed by an invasion of "peoples of the sea," i. e., from the eastern coast of the Mediterranean.

Nothing is less immobile than the Orient. Frontiers change continually; states rise, expand, decline, become displaced, and die without ceasing. In any case we do not see any one of the states, in the course of its development, arrested in an absolute manner

in the face of purely physical limits. This is true even in the case of oceans and deserts, for when the group does not succeed in crossing them, sooner or later a foreign group traverses them and establishes communication.

The evolution of China, the eccentricities of which we mistakenly delight to point out, is, on the contrary, in its fundamental characteristics, analogous to that which characterizes the formation of all great empires. We find again in China the same subdivisions which we have already observed, and which we shall have occasion again to note elsewhere. From five to seven adult individuals form a family; five families constitute a group with a patriarch; five groups form a section, with an assistant of the section; four sections or one hundred families represent a commune, with a head-man of the same, the designation "people of the hundred families" here reminding us that the commune or primitive community is at the base and at the beginning of the empire. Families and sections owe each other reciprocal aid and assistance. This obligation is more rigorous in the family than in the section, and more rigorous in the section than in the commune.

The extra-European empires, like China, Egypt, ancient Peru and Mexico, India, Persia, etc., have followed the same evolution as the European empires, such as Turkey and Russia and all the other states of Europe. But all have not evolved into equally advanced stages; and special conditions have modified their particular evolutions, but solely from the point of view of secondary and accessory peculiarities. For instance, the Chinese *mir* which persisted for twenty generations, during the Chinese feudalism, is the analogue of the Russian *mir*, although the Russian and Chinese feudalism and the organization of the nobility are not absolutely identical.

In China, as elsewhere, at no moment of its evolution did the rivers or creeks serve as frontiers between social groups, communities, tribes, and principalities, or feudal kingdoms. So also as to mountains, which were always finally colonized upon both slopes by populations of the same group. Sometimes, as elsewhere, isolation was brought about between groups, but it was accomplished by reason of the cessation of the intercourse through the

difficulties of communicating between the opposite slopes. However, this isolation was never more than relative and momentary. As to oceans, they ceased to be obstacles for the great empires, and finally also the deserts. Neither the circle of deserts and mountains of China, nor its seas, nor its great wall were obstacles either to its development or to its invasion. They were decorations and accessories of the social drama which was, is, and will be always and everywhere the same.

I have devoted a special study to the evolution of China, and I deem it unnecessary to recur to it except to point out that it is in the Chinese civilization that we meet for the first time political beliefs differentiated into a body of sociological doctrines. This fact is all the more remarkable as it coincides, toward the end of the fourth and the beginning of the third century B. C., with the termination of the feudal and the formation of the imperial régime, as a result of the anarchistic and communistic socialism whose propaganda had characterized the decline of the feudal organization. It was then that Meng-Tsen clearly gave out a theory of frontiers much superior in its positivism to those advanced by the majority of our modern jurists and political metaphysicians, and which is partly in harmony with the views of the writer. The great Chinese philosopher proclaims that the best-governed state will also be the most powerful. Empire will come to coincide with that state which, in its provisions so well verified by history, must soon be substituted for the feudal régime. All the people will come to be incorporated in the state which will be the best. According to him, the best state will be the most peaceful one. He deduces that the annexation of other kingdoms for the benefit of the one destined to become an empire will be brought about only through the consent of the people. The people will spontaneously ask for their incorporation in order to enjoy the benefits of a model organization. The point of view is certainly very idealistic, but the conception is profound in what concerns the theory of frontiers. It rests in the first place upon the principle that the power of expansion of every society is adequate to its composition and to its internal organization, and, furthermore, Meng-Tsen sharply opposes peace to war by attributing to the

first superiority of attraction, assimilation, and consequently superiority of life and development. And he concludes that the peaceful organization of the social forces ought finally to predominate over their military organization, and consequently break up the military frontiers. In the same sense he is a partisan of the abolition of the economic frontiers between peoples, i. e., of the customs duties. In a word, "it is not necessary to place the limits of a people in entirely material frontiers, nor the strength of a kingdom in the obstacles of mountains and water-courses that face the enemy, nor the imposing majesty of the empire in a great military equipment." Nothing is truer. Moreover, mere formulæ and proclamations concerning the substitution of peace for war do not suffice. War is always a form of unstable equilibrium of the life of societies, but an onerous, violent, and brutal form. The problem submitted to science is to discover the positive conditions of peaceful organization capable of giving satisfaction to the necessities of order within the variations which constitute the accompaniment of all living existence. It is necessary, therefore, that the internal organization of every society be adjusted continuously to the variations which are spontaneously produced inside and outside of itself. To disarm is good, to organize peace is better.

Thus it is reserved to sociology to embrace the question in its integrality and to show that the problem of frontiers and war is inseparable from the internal reform of the people. Every organization has an inclosure the most advantageous to its existence within the conditions in which it is placed. Its exterior structure responds to the interior structure. An armor of steel harmonizes no more with a thinker than a circle of fortresses and cannon with a society whose life, like that of the thinker, has become universal.

If from China we pass into India, we observe at first glance the apparent regularity of the natural or rather geographical divisions of the vast peninsula. At the south, the west, and the east, deep seas; at the northwest, the Indus; and behind that, the lofty mountains separating India from western Asia. But between the two slopes of these mountains exist some pretty

numerous defiles which were historic routes of communication and invasion. Toward Thibet and China physical obstacles appear still more impassable; first, the course of the Ganges; then behind that rise the highest mountains of the globe. Communication seems almost impossible. But nevertheless by that route Buddhism with its missionaries was scattered from India into China. The same difficulties are presented in the interior. The whole maritime circumference is traversed by chains of mountains which are prolonged toward the interior, and of which some advance from west to northeast entirely across the country. There are not alone jungles (in Sanskrit *jungala*, "deserts") interposed between the populations. There are, as in Greece, mountains and morasses as great obstacles to unification; nevertheless the Aryan invasion was able to extend above and beyond all the obstacles. Tribes were transformed into principalities, and these into kingdoms, and the kingdoms into vast empires. None of these obstacles positively or historically constituted a natural or insurmountable obstacle, for in fact the tribes and principalities generally occupied opposite slopes of the mountains, the two banks of rivers and creeks, and the circle of the jungles. In spite of accessory variations, the general evolution and that of the frontiers were analogous to the evolution which was accomplished in the great regions of the plains, as in Russia. And even today do we not see India carried along in the great world-movement by the tow of English imperialism? However, the interior and exterior configuration of India partly explains its present inferiority as compared to Europe. It is necessary, however, to remark that in the eighteenth century its industry was not inferior to that of England. But the latter was better constituted as an oceanic and intercontinental power. In this respect India is inferior to Europe considered in its entirety. It is especially inferior to Greece, while surpassing Asia by the extent of its coasts relatively to the territorial mass.

The geographic structure of India and the nature of its territory were elements which entered naturally, like the ethnic characteristics of its populations, into the formation of its interior and exterior frontiers. But these latter are altogether sociological,

i. e., determined by the action of internal social factors in correlation with all the external social factors. In a word, the theory of frontiers is everywhere and always sociological. Rivers, creeks, lakes, interior seas, oceans, mountains, deserts, and the ethnological characteristics of groups are only the elements. The frontier is a social phenomenon resulting from the combination of these elements, a social phenomenon representative at once of an equilibrium and a movement.

When the Code of Manu recommends to the king "to establish himself in a city whose access is defended either by a desert, or by land, or by water, or by forest, or by soldiers, or by mountains, and to strive as much as possible to occupy a city protected by mountains and having a fortress," it is not a sociological theory that he advances. These words are practical counsels which he gives in regard to the existing social state. The state was then represented by a military theocracy in which the military caste was subordinated to the sacerdotal power within the principalities and distinct kingdoms. Buddhism coincided, on the contrary, with the period of the political unification of India, and with a corresponding tendency to a greater social equality. It followed the lowering and leveling of the political frontiers as well as of those existing between classes.

The Aryans, setting out from regions whose locality is still a matter of doubt, constituted nomadic hordes at a time when Egypt, Chaldea, Assyria, and China already represented great societies. The Aryan nomadic tribes of hunters and pastoral people slowly extended their sway by successive invasions in two directions. First, at the east in the basins of the Indus and Ganges, whence they dominated the aboriginal tribes of India by penetrating more and more to the interior of the peninsula. Second, at the west they scattered conformably to the natural roads which connected the Asiatico-European continent. These lines in general corresponded to a uniform distribution of climates, natural products, and the chief conditions of life. They were the easiest and most advantageous routes for emigrants, and required the least effort for adapting the people to the new environments. The Aryans established themselves in this man-

ner in Persia, in northern Asia Minor, in Greece, along the northern coast of the Mediterranean, in Italy, and in almost the whole of Europe. At the time when in the center and in the north of Europe they were still nomads, in India and especially in Persia they had founded great civilizations. For a while Persia dominated all of the old oriental states. It had successively swept away and passed beyond the frontiers of hordes, tribes, principalities, and particular kingdoms, and it formed a great empire, whose divisions, as in all other empires, no longer were based on geographical or genetic conditions, and whose aim was to annihilate these old divisions within the unitary centralization of the "ring of kings." In the sixth century Persia was divided into satrapies, four of which comprised the Greek regions of Asia Minor. They were purely military and administrative divisions, having scarcely any reference to topography or original divisions. Furthermore, the military forces were placed chiefly in the most exposed zones, the frontier zones, the last acquired, and the least stable.

Never at any time in this development, which had ended in the formation of a more considerable empire than had before existed, were the very numerous physical frontiers, represented by mountains, rivers, and deserts, absolute obstacles to the development of the state. They were, at most, points of momentary arrest, or rather of relays, stations, or points of support for greater developments. In the matter of expansion every empire obeys its military and conquering instincts, but these instincts are themselves derived from an economic necessity which obliges every people or every dominant class living upon the exploitation of other peoples or other classes always to extend its domains and its capital in order to maintain and, as much as possible, even to increase the relative importance of the always unstable superior class as over against the inferior. To stop the work of conquest or exploitation is to renounce domination and to tend toward democracy and equality. Such a conception, although foreseen by the Chinese philosophy, and later by Buddhism, never succeeded in evolving from the historic evolution of the Persian empire. At bottom, like every military and conquering empire, its policy never ceased to be that the limits of the empire should provide for, and extend

as much as possible, the forces of the empire. But is not even that the confirmation of our theory, according to which the frontiers are always the line of equilibrium resulting from nature and the composition of the internal forces of society, in correlation with nature and the composition of the external forces? The geographical and ethnic factors are only the constituent primordial elements of the combination whence results every social phenomenon, and especially that which we call a frontier. Therefore the frontier may be physical, but in all cases it must be social, and its demarkation may consist only in symbolical and even conventional signs. The essential thing is that it is always the point at which the equilibrium between the inside and outside is effected. And in this respect it may have an infinity of internal as well as external demarkations, as well as differences, according to the several social forces which may more or less reciprocally penetrate each other. For example, this will be the case for the religious, artistic, scientific, and economic frontiers, which may be much more extensive than the military and political frontiers properly speaking. The latter are always narrower and higher by reason of the necessity of defending the group, according as the nature of the group is or is not military and authoritative.

Some Persian legends themselves very clearly show, in a symbolic fashion, the still very confused conception that the limits of a state are always in correlation with its internal forces and the external resistance. For instance, according to one of these legends Menondjer, a young son of Fenydoux, vanquisher of Afrasiab, chief of the Turanians, offered to the latter a permanent peace by proposing to him to trace a frontier separating Turan and Iran. The treaty was arranged except upon the question of knowing up to what limit Hyrcania and Irania should extend to the east. "The prince who reigned over Hyrcania, being consulted, said that he would climb to the summit of Demavend, and that he would shoot an arrow from the eastern side, and that wherever the arrow fell there should be the frontier. Prince Areck took an arrow made of light and short wood, bent his bow, and the dart went whistling and sailing through the air from sunrise until noon, and fell upon the bank of the Oxus." Thus it was

that under Menondjer, Hyrcania quite entirely remained in possession of Iran. A crowd of similar legends are met among the most dissimilar peoples; sometimes, for example, the ceded territory is made to correspond to that area which might be traversed either by foot or by horse in one day. In all cases the limit is fixed by the power of penetration of a body placed in movement, in connection with the reaction which tends to arrest this movement at a point at which in reality it is only transformed, thus giving rise to new phenomena, which in their turn may bring about another movement.

Are not the facts relative to these very expressive primitive legends similar to the processes according to which today in international law the limits of the territorial seas are fixed by the range of a cannon fired from the shore? Is not the range of a cannon like that of the social forces, always changeable and even progressive, according to this way of expressing the limits? For example, where would be the territorial limits in the straits of Dover between France and England, if, as we can perceive, the cannon range from either side extend beyond the straits? However, for a great number of social forces more powerful than the cannon this is what happens every day under our eyes. It also explains how the military and political frontiers are always slower than, and in the rear of, the social forces, properly speaking. Always and everywhere the real frontier is extended up to the limit of the military force. But the blind theorists, through the superficial aspect of the military structure of civilizations in the bosom of which they live, have lost sight of the fact that the military force is not the only social force; that there are more energetic, more penetrating, more irresistible, and even more protective, forces than cannon balls and strategic obstacles. These other forces are truly expansive and civilizing, but their law is the same; they also are limited within and without.

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[*To be continued.*]